



16 December 2003

Dear Colleagues:

The first round CESUs are approaching their five-year anniversary dates in May and June 2004. The cooperative/joint venture agreements for these CESUs will be up for renewal at that time. Hence, a necessary step is the review and decision on renewal of the Colorado Plateau, North Atlantic Coast, Rocky Mountains, and Southern Appalachian Mountains CESUs. The CESU Council has approved the steps and criteria that will be used in this process; the goal is an efficient review and a timely renewal.

Enclosed is a brief guide that has been prepared for the managers committees of these CESUs. This guide describes the purpose of the review and renewal, criteria for evaluation, overview of the review and renewal process (as approved by the CESU Council), and review materials needed from each managers committee. Please distribute the guide as useful.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me as soon as convenient – by phone, fax or email as you prefer.

The managers committees play an important role in the CESU Network. We look forward to these first renewals as an opportunity to learn more about your CESU activities, and to move forward in the development of the CESU concept.

Sincerely,

*/signed/ Gary Machlis*

Dr. Gary E. Machlis  
CESU National Coordinator

Enclosure



## **Purpose of the CESU Review and Renewal**

Each Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) cooperative/joint venture agreement has a term of five years from the effective date of execution. The effective date is determined from the date of the last signature on the agreement. Each CESU agreement states that the activities of the CESU can be continued for another five-year period by mutual consent of the parties to the agreement (Article III B).

The objectives of the CESU review and decision on renewal are to:

- assess mutual consent in continuing the activities of the CESU,
- evaluate the activities of each CESU over the last five years, including collaborative responsibilities described in each agreement, and
- renew each agreement, as appropriate.

## **General Criteria**

Four general criteria guide the CESU review. Each criterion is presented as a question. The four general criteria are:

1. Were the formal commitments identified in the CESU agreement (and amendments) fulfilled?
2. Were the projects successfully completed, and was there effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?
3. Was there involvement of partner institutions as appropriate in the activities and projects of the CESU?
4. Did the CESU facilitate collaboration and substantial involvement among its participants?

## **Overview of the Review and Renewal Process**

CESU Council staff will coordinate the review through the Host Universities and Managers Committees. This review will include four key elements:

1. The host university prepares a letter of interest describing the interest and intent of the host and each of its non-federal partners to renew the CESU. The host university sends this letter to the CESU National Coordinator by 15 January 2004.
2. The host university, working with its non-federal partners, prepares a brief CESU self-assessment. The host university sends this self-assessment to the CESU National Coordinator by 15 January 2004.
3. The CESU managers committee prepares a brief review and recommendation to the CESU Council concerning renewal. (The managers committee will receive a copy of the CESU self-assessment.) The managers committee sends its review to the CESU National Coordinator by 1 March 2004.

4. The CESU managers committee identifies one to three external reviewers (the number of reviewers to be determined by the managers committee). The external reviewers prepare an independent review and recommendation to the CESU Council concerning renewal. (The external reviewers will receive a copy of the CESU self-assessment.) The external reviewers send their review to the CESU National Coordinator by **1 March 2004**.

CESU Council staff will assemble these materials and forward them to the CESU Council. After the Council has examined the review materials, it will decide on the renewal of each CESU in March 2004. CESU Council staff will then coordinate the renewal of the agreements as appropriate in April-May 2004.

## **Review Materials Needed from the Managers Committee**

The managers committee prepares materials for two key elements of the CESU review:

1. A *brief review and recommendation* on renewal of the CESU for an additional 5-year period.
2. An *independent external review* of the CESU, by 1-3 external reviewers.

The managers committee has the flexibility to develop its own process by which it conducts the reviews and formulates its recommendation. All review materials should be electronically sent to the CESU National Coordinator by **1 March 2004**.

### ***The Managers Committee Review and Recommendation***

The managers committee should prepare a review of the CESU, evaluating activities during the 5-year agreement period. The review should be brief – 3-5 pages. This review should reflect the four general criteria listed below. For each criterion, there are a series of specific review questions that can help organize the review. The managers committee will receive a copy of the host university's (and non-Federal partners) self-assessment to assist in preparing the managers committee review. The self-assessment will be provided to the managers committee by the CESU national staff after it has been received from the host university, scheduled for 15 January 2004.

The managers committee should prepare a specific recommendation to the CESU Council regarding the renewal of the CESU agreement. This recommendation should clearly state whether the managers committee recommends for or against renewal of the CESU agreement for another 5-year term.

The managers committee has the flexibility to develop its own process for its review and recommendation. The review and recommendation should be electronically sent directly to the CESU National Coordinator, no later than **1 March 2004**.

### ***External Review of the CESU***

The managers committee should appoint at least one and no more than three external reviewers to review the CESU. These reviewers should be selected **no later than 1 February 2004**. These reviewers should be selected to avoid conflict of interest and unnecessary cost. (All costs of the external review are the responsibility of the managers committee and its representing agencies, and hence a low cost or *pro bono* review is

encouraged.) The process for conducting the external review should be developed by the managers committee.

The external reviewer(s) should review the CESU, evaluating the activities during the 5-year agreement period. The review should be brief – 3-5 pages. The review(s) should reflect the four general criteria listed below. For each criterion, there are a series of specific questions that can help organize the review.

The external reviewer(s) will receive a copy of the host university's (and non-Federal partners) self-assessment to assist in preparing the external review. The self-assessment will be provided to the external reviewer(s) by the CESU national staff after it has been received from the host university, scheduled for 15 January 2004.

The external review(s) should be electronically sent directly by the reviewer(s) to the CESU National Coordinator, no later than **1 March 2004**.

## Criteria and Questions to Help Organize the Review

### *Criterion 1:*

Were the formal commitments identified in the CESU agreement (and amendments) fulfilled?

1. Did the host university and partner institutions conduct with participating federal agencies a program of research, technical assistance and education related to the CESU objectives?
2. Did the host university and partner institutions develop and adopt with participating federal agencies a CESU role and mission statement?
3. Did the host university and partner institutions develop and adopt with participating federal agencies a multi-year CESU strategic plan?
4. Were periodic meetings of the CESU convened for the purpose of collaboration and coordination of CESU activities?
5. Did the host university and partner institutions develop with participating federal agencies annual work plans to guide the activities of the CESU?
6. Were students encouraged to participate in the activities of the CESU?
7. Did the host university and partner institutions offer educational and training opportunities to participating federal agencies' employees?
8. Did the host university provide basic administrative and clerical support, access to campus facilities, suitable office space and basic services for federal agencies' personnel to be located at the host university?
9. Did the host university coordinate activities, as appropriate, with the partner institutions and develop administrative policies for such coordination?
10. Did the host university establish a CESU Managers Committee and convene annual meetings?

*Criterion 2:*

Were the projects successfully completed, and was there effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?

1. Were projects conducted successfully, with all project deliverables accepted by collaborating federal agency(s) providing project funds?
2. Were some projects unsuccessful, with project deliverables rejected by collaborating federal agency(s) providing project funds?
3. Did the host university and partner institutions provide effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?

*Criterion 3:*

Was there involvement of the partner institutions as appropriate in the activities and projects of the CESU?

1. Did partner institutions participate in activities of the CESU?
2. Did partner institutions participate in projects of the CESU?

*Criterion 4:*

Did the CESU facilitate collaboration and substantial involvement among its federal agency partners?

*For more information, contact:*

Dr. Gary Machlis  
CESU National Coordinator  
Phone: 202.208.5391  
Fax: 202.208.3060  
Email: [gmachlis@uidaho.edu](mailto:gmachlis@uidaho.edu)

Dr. Jean McKendry  
CESU Deputy National Coordinator  
Phone: 202.219.8894  
Fax: 202.208.3060  
Email: [jeanm@uidaho.edu](mailto:jeanm@uidaho.edu)